

MINUTES

Board of Water Commissioners Public Works Conference Room 630 Garden Street March 10, 2008, 3:00 PM

COMMISSIONERS PRESENT: Kate Rees, James Smith, Landon Neustadt, Russell Ruiz

PLANNING COMMISSIONER PRESENT: Addison Thompson, Planning Commissioner

STAFF PRESENT: Paul Casey, Acting Public Works Director; Rebecca Bjork, Acting Water

Resources Manager; John Schoof, Acting Wastewater System Manager; Cathy Taylor, Water System Manager; Bill Ferguson, Water Resources Supervisor;

Anne Van Belkom, Administrative Assistant.

PUBLIC: Steve Little

1. **CALL TO ORDER:** The meeting was called to order at 3:04 PM

CHANGES TO THE AGENDA: None

3. **COMMENTS BY THE PUBLIC:** None.

4. **MEETING MINUTES, FEBRUARY 11, 2008**: MOTION (Smith/Ruiz, 4-0-0): to approve the minutes as submitted.

- 5. AGRICULTURAL RATES REVIEW FROM STEVE LITTLE, WESTWOOD HILLS AVOCADO ALLIANCE: Mr. Ferguson reviewed a handout that surveyed agricultural water rates from various communities throughout Southern California. Mr. Little explained the benefits of having avocado orchards in our area, and requested that the Water Commission consider eliminating the allocation system all together and reducing the agricultural water rate back to a rate of \$1.32 per HCF, with a freeze on the proposed 3.5% increase effective July 1, 2008. The Water Commission asked to have this item re-agendized for a future meeting, with staff providing recommendations regarding proposed agricultural water rates, scheduled future increases, and the need for an agricultural water allocation system.
- 6. PLAN SANTA BARBARA AND UPDATE OF LONG TERM WATER SUPPLY PROGRAM PRELIMINARY SCHEDULE: Mr. Ferguson summarized the Plan Santa Barbara process for updating the City's General Plan and how the update of the Long Term Water Supply Program will integrate with this process. Commissioner Smith requested that expanded use of recycled water be analyzed as a potential alternative to desalinization desalination. Commissioner Neustadt cautioned the Water Commission to consider state water as a "least reliable" water source and to aim for self reliance in water supply planning. Staff noted that Santa Barbara has always been very conservative regarding state water and will continue to be so.
- 7. WATER QUALITY UPDATE: Ms. Taylor informed the Water Commission that Gibraltar Reservoir is still spilling and that elevated levels of TOC and DOC from the Zaca Fire have given cause for increased measures at the treatment plant for water treatment. The elevated levels of TOC and DOC in the water have also cause increased trihalomethanes (THM's) levels in the distribution system. While increased water quality monitoring is being conducted and extra efforts are being made to remove TOC and DOC to minimize THM problems, there is the potential for exceedance of THM standards by August 2008. Of concern for both Gibraltar Reservoir and Lake Cachuma are algae blooms this summer, which would affect the taste and odor of the drinking water. It would also clog filters at the treatment plant, compromising the plant's ability to meet peak water demands in the summer. As a precautionary measure, staff will begin testing in April for the precursors of algae growth in both Gibraltar and Cachuma.
- 8. **ORTEGA GROUNDWATER TREATMENT PLANT CHANGE IN SCOPE OF CONSULTANT WORK:** Ms. Taylor explained the unexpected positive test results achieved by Carollo Engineers that may allow for a less expensive rehabilitation of the facility using Granulated Ferric Oxide (GFO) along with a traditional sand filtration process to treat the water. Carollo's scope of work has been revised to further explore this treatment option.

- 9. WATER RESOURCES MANAGER'S REPORT: Ms Bjork distributed and reviewed the monthly Water Resources Manager's report on water production, rainfall, and wastewater influent. Gibraltar rainfall data currently stands at 31.52 inches for the water year. Water demand has started to go back down toward the estimated normal levels of 14,000 AF. In spite of the winter rain storms this year that caused an increase in the flows into El Estero, the collection system handled the storms very well with inflows levels staying within the capacity of the plant. Ms. Bjork also updated the Water Commission regarding a number of items recently approved by Council. Water Commissioner Rees informed the Water Commission about the potential threat of Quagga mussel infestation that could have catastrophic consequences on our water supply. On March 11, 2008, the County Board of Supervisors will hold a public hearing to discuss this issue, including the possibility of a boating ban on Lake Cachuma to prevent Quagga mussel infestation. The County is concerned about the cost of installing boat decontamination stations, yet they are also concerned with the potential loss of revenue if boating is banned for any length of time.
- 10. **DATE OF NEXT SCHEDULED MEETING**: It was confirmed that the next Water Commission meeting is scheduled for Monday, April 14, 2008, at 3:00 PM.

The meeting was adjourned at 4:40 PM.

AVB Approved: April 14, 2008